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LEGATION OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICAAddis Ababa,  
Ethiopia.

August 22nd, 1931.

SEP 22 31

CONFIDENTIAL.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
DIVISION OF  
WESTERN HEMISPHERE AFFAIRS  
FOR DISTRIBUTION  
No. 795

10-5-31

No. 795.

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,  
Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to report the arrival here on August 19th, 1931, for the announced purpose of an official visit to the Ethiopian Government, of the Duke Astuto di Lucchesi who is Governor — appointed about one year ago — of the Italian Colony of Eritrea. The pending visit of the Governor was briefly reported in a previous one of the Legation's Despatches.

The local Italian Minister has worked indefatigably to make the visit of the Governor of Eritrea particularly impressive, and he has succeeded. More prominent Ethiopian officials, accompanied by greater numbers of cavalry escort,

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escort, went to the railway station to meet Astuto than ever before occurred in connection with the arrival of a foreign visitor of related rank. The arrangements have probably cost my Italian colleague considerable in the way of presents to minor officials and in the way of exaggerated promises to the Emperor and Minister of Foreign Affairs. The latter official has practically vacated his offices in order that they may be occupied by the Governor as a residence during his sojourn of from eight to ten days here.

The visit is announced to be merely one of official courtesy, but the Legation does not doubt insinuations from the British and French Legations that Astuto has come here with special instructions from Mr. Mussolini to cooperate with my Italian colleague to procure — by cajolery, fine promises, or threats — a showdown as to what Italian economic interests may hope for in Ethiopia. The more important points which it is understood will be discussed are: The extension of the railway which the Italians are now building from Asmara to the frontier in the direction of Gondar; the possible construction of a highway from the frontier opposite Adowa down to Dessie; the speeding up of the construction of the Assab-Dessie highway long under discussion; and the construction of a dam or other control works on the Wabi Shebeli river in the southeast (originally reported in Legation's No. 226 of July 15th, 1929) to provide water for the development of cotton irrigation in Italian Somaliland. The Legation will in time be able to

confirm

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confirm these suggested discussions, as well as the discussion of other matters of perhaps lesser importance.

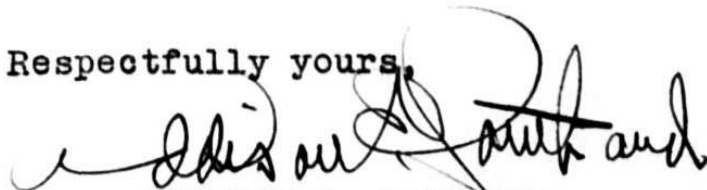
In various recent despatches the Legation has sent to the Department original comment, and translations of statements of Italian policy taken from Italian newspapers, which indicate a new and more aggressive Italian policy towards Ethiopia. This visit of the Governor of Eritrea is the latest definite step confirming the presence of a new and more active policy.

My British colleague, with whom I have discussed Astuto's visit, seems a little sour on the subject and I suspect from his attitude that the British do not entirely approve of this new Italian aggressiveness. The local French are, of course, always anti-Italian in matters relating at least to Ethiopia. One must, however, admire the Italian determination to get what they can here as soon as possible. They are proceeding with energy and in ways cleverly calculated to impress the Ethiopians. The Legation believes that the Governor has brought to the Emperor various rich presents, in addition to glowing promises, but just what they are has not yet been revealed. The Governor is accompanied by the naval officer commanding the gunboat which brought him from Massowah to Djibouti, by a military aide, and by his principal secretary. Various clerks, native soldiers, etc., complete his entourage which is very evidently designed to impress the Ethiopians.

As has been previously remarked in the Legation's Despatches the late Empress Zeoditu had neither respect  
nor

nor liking for the Italians. In this feeling she was supported by the Church and by the older feudal chieftains. The present Emperor is, however, a man with little prejudice on any foreign relations. He in general likes peace and compromise with his foreign relations, and has undoubtedly fallen considerably under the influence of Italian flattery and method. From the viewpoint of this Legation the Italians stand to win from His Majesty substantial concessions should they continue with energy their present pointed methods. The Church and the older feudal chieftains are believed no longer strong enough to prevent the Emperor entering into closer relations with the Italians should His Majesty decide to do so. The next greatest obstacle to Italian progress here would be French opposition but just at this time French influence is in one of its periodical depressions in Ethiopia. The weakness of the present French Minister, now on leave, has not improved the prestige lost through alleged rudeness and lack of tact of his predecessor.

Respectfully yours,

  
ADDISON E. SOUTHARD.

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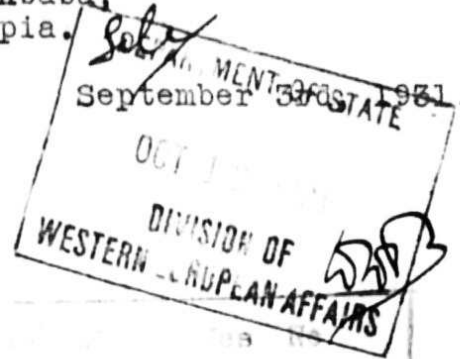
PM RECD

LEGATION OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Addis Ababa,  
Ethiopia.



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FOR DISSEMINATION

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CONFIDENTIAL.

No. 804.

The Honorable

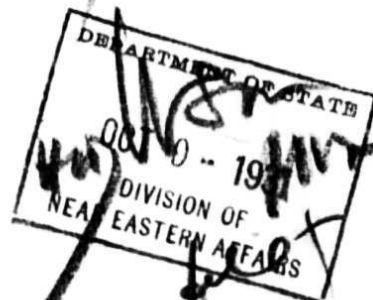
The Secretary of State,  
Washington.

Sir:

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I have the honor to refer to the Legation's No. 795 of August 22nd, 1931, reporting the arrival here on an official visit of the Duke Astuto di Lucchesi, Governor of the Italian Colony of Eritrea.

The Governor departed from Addis Ababa for Eritrea via Djibouti on September 2nd, 1931, after the completion of a sojourn here which established a record for sustained official entertainment and elaborate attention to a visitor of his rank. In addition to a grand dinner and several elaborate audiences given him by the Emperor he was the recipient of state dinners from many of the higher officials



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cials of this Government and from each and every one of the four Royal Rases (Kassa, Hailu, Guksa Arie, and Siyum) now in Addis Ababa. The four dinners by the Rases were without precedent, but were probably by command of the Emperor who in turn was doubtless considerably influenced by the Marquis Paterno, Italian Minister here.

My Italian colleague worked indefatigably to make the visit of the Governor of Eritrea conspicuous and noteworthy, and he should feel proud of the results. No former Italian colonial governor, and neither a British nor a French colonial governor, has ever been shown such conspicuous attention on the occasion of a visit here. The persuasion, material and otherwise, used by my Italian colleague to promote Italian prestige in this grand and marked manner locally, has not yet been revealed but it has been most effective.

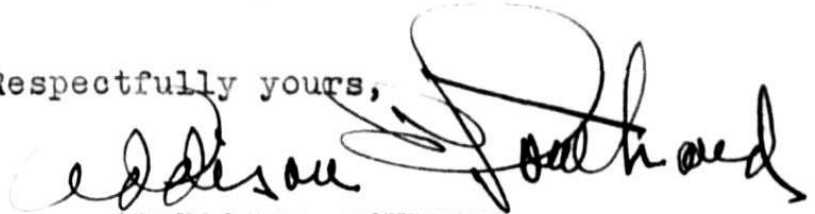
There are rumors, not yet confirmed, that among the handsome presents brought to the Emperor and the Royal Rases by the visiting Governor were samples of striking and new models of arms and ammunition. They hope to stimulate orders for greater supplies! There is also a rumor that Ethiopian interest and attention were favorably aroused and sustained by the promise of my Italian colleague that he and the Governor would be able to arrange for an Italian loan to this government. The Legation has not yet been able to learn of any definite accomplishment by the Governor in the projects of Italian interest which were reported in our previous despatch

to

to be included with the agenda for discussion on the occasion of this visit.

Both my British and French colleagues were plainly envious of the attention shown this Italian governor by the Ethiopians; as they might well be. The visit was, tritely expressed, a Roman triumph.

Respectfully yours,



ADDISON E. SOUTHARD.

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AES/sid.

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JM

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ITALY (political)

3030

Subject : Relationship between Italy and Dependencies.  
Institution of High Commissioner for the Italian  
Colonies of East Africa.

FEB 1 1936

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On January 16, 1936, the Council of Ministers approved a bill presented by the Head of the Government, Mussolini, instituting the office of High Commissioner for the Colonies of East Africa (Eritrea and Italian Somaliland).

The declared purpose of this provision is to effect a unification of government for the two colonies of Eritrea and Somaliland, to coordinate their politics and development. The two colonies have similar problems to solve and by uniting the direction of their affairs under one head, greater efficiency and economy should result.

On January 16, 1936 the press announced that General De Bono was relieved from the office of Minister of the Colonies and appointed High Commissioner for the Colonies of East Africa. The office of Minister of the Colonies was taken over by Mussolini.

At the time the above announcement was made, General De Bono was en route for Italian East-Africa colonies.

REMARKS :

Having gained a share in controlling the outlet to the Red Sea through territorial concession made by France in favor of Eritrea (Rome Pact, signed January 7, 1935) sea communications between Eritrea (on the Red Sea) and Italian Somaliland (on the Indian Ocean) are facilitated and the two colonies are brought into closer contact. Furthermore, due to the tension between Italy and Abyssinia, the two colonies have assumed more political importance, and the High Commissioner for the Colonies of East Africa will guard Italian interests in future diplomatic contacts with Abyssinia.

It is said that Mussolini wishes to prevent a discussion of Italo-Abyssinian territorial contentions and the Ualual incident by the Council of the League of Nations (see ITALY No. 14194-3850), and come to a direct understanding with the Abyssinian Government through the diplomatic channels. (ITALY No. 14217-3850). In fact, Mussolini recently gave an interview to the Abyssinian Minister in Rome, and it is rumored that he expressed his willingness to establish a definite boundary between Abyssinia and Italian Somaliland in agreement with the Abyssinian Government, thus directly settling existing difficulties of the moment between the two countries. It is therefore possible that De Bono has been sent to Somaliland to study the possibilities of a boundary settlement.

V. M. Brady,  
Capt., A. C., U. S. A.,  
Acting Military Attaché.

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